

August 26, 2005

Steering Committee Meeting with Jeff Harris, Flathead County Planning Director

A meeting was held at the Flathead Planning Office on the above date at 10:00 AM. Present were Jeff Harris, Scott Hollinger, Don Loranger, Clarice Ryan, Dense Lang, John Bourquin, Sue Hanson, BJ Grieve, Russ Miller and Doug Averill.

A copy of the survey Methodology and Results, plus a copy of all written comments compiled from the survey, was given to Jeff Harris and BJ Grieve. Doug Averill gave a history of the Bigfork Land Use Plan, which included a community survey in 1992, and was adopted by the Flathead County Commissioners in August of 1993. He explained that the original 1993 Steering Committee was re-convened in 2004 in light of the mandated county Growth Policy to assess needs and update the Bigfork plan. The Steering Committee associated with the Bigfork Development Corporation, now re-named Foundation for a Better Bigfork, for the purposes of the tax-exempt status.

Doug described the process of developing the questionnaire for mailing to the community and that the questionnaire had been evaluated by professional planning advisor, Janet Cornish, to determine fairness and comprehension. Also explained was the process and methodology of mailing, tabulating the survey, and audit trail, noting over 60 volunteers involved in the tabulation process.

Don Loranger presented the results of the survey with a Power Point Presentation.

Harris made the comment "impressive" after the presentation. He explained that the county is proceeding with the development of the Flathead Growth Policy and provided a time-line of the process. He indicated that the county may complete the Growth Plan before considering neighborhood plans. As in the past, the Flathead Planning Board and the Flathead County Commissioners will control Bigfork's zoning. The concerns of Bigfork will be considered, but the focus and concern of the Planning Office and the county Growth Plan is the greater good of the entire county. Harris emphasized that public meetings and input will be a priority in the development of the Growth Plan. He also emphasized that any neighborhood plan must be compliant and consistent with the Flathead County Growth Plan. He noted that three things could occur with the county's acceptance of a neighborhood growth plan:

1. It will be in cinque (compatible with the county Growth Plan)
2. It will have parts that need to be fixed.
3. It will be totally incompatible

The county time-line can be accessed on the county website:

www.co.flathead.mt.us/fcpz/growthpolicy.html

The first county input meetings will begin in early November 2005. Harris also emphasized that the new Growth Policy will replace the current Flathead County Master Plan. He did express that he would attend public meetings in the Bigfork area. He was unable to answer how the county will assess public input (letters-spoken comments, etc). He did emphasize that the Growth Policy will be a broad "umbrella" and will not include specifics. Specific zoning and resources will be addressed after the Growth Policy is completed. If you wish to be on the email list for updates on the process, contact the Planning office at: planningweb@co.flathead.mt.us or write to Flathead County Planning Office, Earle Bennett Building, 1035 First Avenue West, Kalispell, MT 59901.

Sue Hanson
Secretary